

Project Report
Alaska Public Broadcasting, Inc.
Project Number No. 174-05
January 1, 2006 – March 31, 2006

Project Title & Summary

Four project work scopes are embodied in this grant award. The majority of the award is dedicated to a single work scope, that being the Capital Grant Program.

Alaska Public Broadcasting Facilities & Equipment Modernization Project

The purpose of the Public Broadcasting Facilities & Equipment Modernization Project is to provide much needed capital revenue for addressing system-wide infrastructure and technology priorities. In 2004, a system-wide infrastructure and technology needs assessment, ranging from basic tools to new facilities, approximated \$38 Million. The project will be in partnership with the Rasmuson Foundation and potentially other foundations. Total Denali Commission funding: \$4,127,000

Public Radio Conversion to Digital Transmission

Alaska's 26 public radio stations have begun the process of changing their primary transmission equipment to the new standard for digital broadcasting. Funding the appropriate needs for all of the stations will cost approximately \$3 Million. The Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) has already committed \$2.1 Million toward this total and the Rasmuson Foundation has committed some \$372,000 toward the total. This critical funding will assure the project has the capacity to meet anticipated as well as some unanticipated needs. Total Denali Commission funding: \$423,000

Alaska Digital Distribution Network

Alaska Public Broadcasting Data Network is to interconnect all of Alaska's public radio and television stations by means of a digital intranet and the internet. This project was originally funded by the Denali Commission in FY04. \$1.9 Million was set aside to build this modern telecommunications infrastructure. Additional funding is necessary for completion of this project. Total Denali Commission funding: \$100,000

Alaska Rural Communications Service (ARCS) & Satellite Interconnection Revitalization

Repair and replacement of existing broadcast infrastructure used to deliver public telecommunications services via radio and television to Alaskans all across the State. This project was originally funded by the Denali Commission in FY04. Additional funding is necessary for completion of this project. Total Denali Commission funding: \$100,000

Reporting Period Detail: January 1, 2006 –March 31, 2006

Progress and activity during the first quarter of 2006 occurred entirely within two work scope components: the facilities and equipment modernization project and the digital conversion project.

Facilities & Equipment Modernization Project – Capital Grant Program

Overall progress to date includes successful development and implementation of this capital grant program. APBI modeled the grant program after three well established programs which are very familiar to public broadcasters in Alaska:

1. Rasmuson Foundation.
2. Corporation for Public Broadcasting.
3. Public Telecommunications & Facilities Program, U.S. Dept. of Commerce.

We focused on the Rasmuson Foundation approach while incorporating some good ideas from the other two entities. We sought a high degree of integrity and accountability throughout development of the grant program.

Milestones reached since project inception:

- Development of grant program concept and materials: overview, guidelines, priorities, procedures and review process for the first round; including development of application paperwork and administrative systems.
- Announcement of the Round One grant period occurred July 27, 2005. Applications were distributed electronically as well as via U.S. mail to all eligible entities. Deadline for the applications was September 30, 2005.
- A five person, independent grant panel met in Anchorage October 16-17, 2005 to review proposals and make recommendations resulting in seventeen projects being awarded \$788,669 toward a total project cost of \$1,206,178. Collectively, the stations provided a 35% match toward the total project cost.
- The panel process went smoothly and produced a legitimate independent review of the proposals per the grant program priorities and guidelines. It was evident that the panel had read all proposals and had come to the meeting ready to identify and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the proposals. Throughout the review, the APBI staff provided additional station and system information to the panel as requested.
- On October 26, 2005 the APBI board of directors approved the package of recommendations made by the panel and management. Award announcements were made October 31, 2005.

Two milestones occurred during the reporting period January 1, 2006 –March 31, 2006

- Guided by the first round experience, APBI reviewed the grant program process, priorities and results. Based upon this review and in consultation with the Denali Commission, APBI made some revisions to the Round Two application materials.
- Round Two of the grant program was announced on March 10, 2006 with an application deadline of June 1, 2006 and grant awards will be made by July 14, 2006. Application materials were sent to all eligible organizations and follow up confirmation of their receipt of the materials was conducted.

Next Steps:

- APBI will meet with the Rasmuson Foundation this spring to develop plans for securing additional Foundation funding. The Rasmuson Foundation remains a primary source of matching funds for the majority of the station projects.
- We are coordinating the logistics for an independent panel to convene in Anchorage June 29-30 to review the Round Two grant proposals.

Target date for completion of the overall project is December 31, 2008.

Public Radio Conversion to Digital Transmission

APBI continues to provide engineering advice, counsel and overall project management for the first round of nine stations, the second round of fourteen stations, and the final round of three stations that are all converting to digital broadcasting in Alaska.

Progress to date includes:

- Installation and conversion of stations began in November 2005 in Southeast Alaska at KRBD Ketchikan and KSTK Wrangell; the first non-commercial digital broadcasters in Alaska.
- Coordination of group bids on behalf of twenty three out of twenty six stations has been completed. Coordination of group equipment purchases has proven to be cost efficient, with most items coming in below the original estimates per station.
- Group purchasing also results in standardizing core transmission technology throughout the statewide system. This in turn fosters more efficient and cost effective technical support within the system today and in the future.
- Technical training on new equipment has occurred for some key station technical staff including two engineers who had a full week of digital transmission equipment training at Harris Broadcasters in Quincy, Illinois. Technical support for station design and installation work of their digital transmission facilities is on-going with all stations.

Digital conversion project activity detail for reporting period January 1, 2006 – March 31, 2006:

A. Round I HD Radio Conversion:

- a. KCAW-FM, Sitka:*** The HD project at this station is essentially complete. Completion awaits a back ordered part for the digital antenna system. The station is transmitting in HD Radio and its analog channel. The transmitter site in Sitka is located atop an old airport control tower. The tower riggers identified several serious structural and mounting defects on the existing tower and guys. These defects were corrected by converting the guy system to a star mount system. KCAW now has a modern transmission chain, replacing equipment, which in some cases was twenty years old.
- b. KTOO-FM, Juneau:*** The HD project at this station is complete. The FM antenna was replaced. The Phyllystran guy cables for the tower were replaced. The antenna and guy cables were at the end of their useful life. HD Radio modules were installed in the existing Broadcast Electronics transmitter. KTOO-FM is the first Public Radio station in the state to operate full time in the HD-2 mode. They have their main channel audio in the analog and digital mode. They transmit another different program stream on their HD-2 channel.
- c. KFSK-FM, Petersburg:*** The HD project at this station is complete. The old transmitting tower had to be replaced because of the expansion of the school. A new self supporting tower was installed. The transmission plant is essentially all new at this station. A combination digital-analog transmitter was purchased, along with HD Radio modulation equipment.
- d. KCHU-AM, Valdez:*** The new AM transmitter is inside the transmitter building. The ATU (antenna tuning unit) is in Valdez, in dry secure storage. Installation awaits the melting of snow at the transmitter site.
- e. KYUK-AM, Bethel:*** HD radio equipment has been delivered and installed at the transmitter site. Completion of the HD Project will require the construction of a new transmitting tower; a major development which will delay completion of this project.

B. Round II HD Radio Conversion

- a. STL (Studio Transmitter Link) and Audio Processors:*** The STL equipment and audio processors for all stations have arrived at our office in Anchorage. They are in the process of being integrated, tested, and deployed.
- b. STL links and audio processors have been installed at the following stations:***
 - i.*** KOTZ-AM, Kotzebue
 - ii.*** KUAC-FM, Fairbanks
 - iii.*** KBBI-AM, Homer
 - iv.*** KDLG-AM, Dillingham